



## FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

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*For Immediate Release*

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# Park Authority Archaeologists Return Civil War Remains

Two staff members from the Fairfax County Park Authority started out early Friday morning, driving several hundred miles to the Bourne Cemetery in Massachusetts, bringing with them the remains of six Civil War soldiers unearthed in Centreville, VA during construction of a restaurant in 1997. Since their discovery, an arduous search for the story of their past has been underway by Park Authority staff, volunteers, and interested citizens. The Park Authority worked in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution in the excavation of the remains. These efforts culminated in ceremonies hosted by the Massachusetts Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War on Saturday which featured a horse drawn hearse, a winding procession to the burial site led by a fife and drum corps, a rifle salute, presentation of colors, and a military guard watching over each casket throughout the day as visitors paid tribute to these unknown soldiers.

“It is fitting that after all these years these soldiers are returning to their home state, said Supervisor Michael R. Frey, representative on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in the Sully District. “We honor these men for their courage and sacrifice and understand that even all these years later, their story is an important part of our past and a symbol relevant in today’s world.”

It is believed on the basis of extensive research that the six Union soldiers were casualties from the Battle of Blackburn’s Ford, which occurred three days before the main engagement of First Manassas/Bull Run. After the opening shots of the Civil War at Fort Sumter, the Federal (Union) Army gathered in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. In July, they moved out toward the Confederate forces around Manassas. The Union massed in Centreville. On July 18, they tried a reconnaissance at the Blackburn’s Ford crossing of Bull Run. They were repulsed with casualties in two Union volunteer regiments, the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts and the 12<sup>th</sup> New York and in a battery of Regular artillery. Many of the wounded were brought back to Centreville, where several buildings were used as hospitals. These were many of the first soldiers buried in Centreville.

When the burials were discovered, the Park Authority obtained all necessary permits from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for the removal of human remains and conducted all excavations and analysis under the stipulations of the Virginia Antiquities Act.

For more information contact the Fairfax County Park Authority Public Information Office at 703-324-8662. Photographs of the excavations can be accessed at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/press/photos>.

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